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BOOK REVIEWS

The Romance of Old Philadelphia. By John T. Faris, author of *Old Roads Out of Philadelphia*, joint author of *The Virgin Islands: Our New Possessions and the British Islands*. With frontispiece of color and 100 illustrations from original sources and photographs by Philip B. Wallace. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1918. Pp. 336. Price, \$4.50 net.

Colonial Virginia, Its People and Customs. By Mary Newton Stanard, author of *The Dreamer—The Life-Story of Edgar Allen Poe* and *The Story of Bacon's Rebellion*. With 93 illustrations. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1917. Pp. 376.

"The genius of Romance has long since taken his hat," lamented the author of *Aguecheek* (now *My Unknown Chum*). He nevertheless mingled with his regret the consoling reflection that "it is a satisfaction to remember that such things were."

The things that were in Old Philadelphia form the topic-scheme of Mr. Faris's attractively illustrated book. His readers, unlike *Aguecheek*, will probably derive satisfaction from the realization that most of the things pictured by letterpress and illustration no longer are, although undoubtedly "such things were," in Philadelphia.

Even a cursory glance at the pages of *The Romance of Old Philadelphia* will serve to indicate to the reader that he has under his eyes not a history or even a story. The volume, covering the more than one hundred years that elapsed from the founding of Penn's green town to the close of the eighteenth century, is not technically a "romance." It is a series of unrelated chapters dealing with phases of life, social customs, mercantile peculiarities, schools and schoolmasters, methods of travel, quaint postal facilities and the like, of the old city. Each chapter, however, pursues with a fair amount of chronological consecutiveness the topics it takes up for treatment. Thus we have accounts of the trials and hazards undergone by the early settlers in the ocean voyage from England to the sylvan paradise of Penn; the plans and methods of house-building and home-making; the beginnings of city government; glimpses of business life; social life and recreations; church customs; courtship and marriage, and the social

amenities surrounding these. Each of these topics has its own chapter.

Where in all this is the "romance"? Perhaps we shall dimly sense some of its glamour when we read of the cave-dwellings of a few poor settlers; of the unpaved streets and miry footpaths into which the hapless pedestrian sank angle-deep, or the dust-laden winds of the dry days—this latter atmospheric effect being, however, no exclusive possession of the olden city—humbling the head with dust and ashes. And when we further read of noisome alleys, hut-like grog shops, the midnight revelry of negroes, the rare visits of pirates, the occasional outfitting of privateers, perhaps we shall catch imaginative glimpses of the romance that characterizes Pierce Egan's stories of Old London or the more classical narratives of Harrison Ainsworth. Meanwhile we must remember that Mr. Faris's book does not pretend to be a story or a collection of stories. It is historical writing, but what we get is not a narrative but a collection of *genre* pictures.

Let us look at one of the pictures: "Many of the first colonists were compelled to put up with rude cave houses, built in the sloping ground above the Delaware. . . . A bank formed the back of the house, while timbers were driven into the ground for the sides and the front. Earth was heaped against the side timbers, a door and a window or two were cut, and a roof of timbers covered with earth completed the whole. The window-aperture contained a sliding board which, when closed, shut out some of the cold as well as the light. Sometimes a bladder or isinglass was stretched across. Those who were able to display a small paned window were proud of the achievement and were looked on with envy by their neighbors" (p. 47).

We look back with (present) satisfaction at the things that *were*. As to the streets, we find Benjamin Franklin noting in his autobiography that "our city . . . had the disgrace of suffering those streets to remain long unpaved, and in wet weather the wheels of heavy carriages plowed them into a quagmire, so that it was difficult to cross them; and in dry weather the dust was offensive" (*The Romance*, p. 142). Things were in bad shape in some of the streets down to the close of the eighteenth century, and to this cause were attributed the many scourges of smallpox and fever, the worst of the yellow-fever visitations occurring in

1793 and 1798. Perhaps Gertrude Atherton was not drawing upon her imagination when she described Chestnut Street, in the days of the Continental Congress: "It was a brilliant winter's day; drifts of snow hid the dead animals and the garbage in the streets; and all the world was out for Christmas shopping" (*The Conqueror*, p. 394). The yellow-fever followed hard upon this condition; Alexander Hamilton was stricken with the plague: "To the ordinary odors of carcasses and garbage were added those of vinegar, tar, nitre, garlic, and gunpowder . . . and the city confessed itself helpless, although it cleaned the streets." Thus Mrs. Atherton (*op. cit.* p. 421), with doubtless too much of truth. We are accordingly inclined to disagree with the romantic reflections of our friend Aguecheek.

There is, of course, a brighter side to the picture of Old Philadelphia—say, rather, there are many brighter sides. The cave-dwellings were comparatively few, the mansions were many, in the closing years of the seventeenth century. It was not long before the streets, albeit miry or dusty as the weather varied, formed a checkerboard whose squares were lined with beautiful trees and dotted with substantial houses that screened pleasant gardens, while the marts of commerce flourished, Assembly balls herded their fastidious patrons, and dainty folk clad in rainbow fineries picked their dainty way through the mire to fashionable shops and elegant residences. Behind all this were the sober thought and the humdrum daily toil of thinkers and workers. And, after all, perhaps Ben Franklin's mind, practical and scientific in cast rather than artistic and poetical, was more offended by the mud than it was pleased by the greenery. Contemporaries do not perceive romantic elements in current events or any quaintness in the life into which they are born. A later generation may construe past conditions as quaint, and may throw around them the halo of romance. Perhaps this is the reason why an artist, Joseph Pennell, living a century after Franklin, found in his native town a rich source for illustrations of the quaint survivals of past days and could thus furnish Mrs. Pennell's *Our Philadelphia* with highly attractive sketches, happily marrying his pencil to her pen. Perhaps this is also the reason why, in a lecture delivered as recently as the month of March, 1919, he found much to condemn in the appearance of

his loved city: "This city, as Penn planned it," he is reported to have said, "was verdant and beautiful. Now it is the most defiled and filthiest place on the face of the earth. I remember that, when I was a boy, this city was full of little streams that looked pretty but smelled bad. The streams are gone, but the bad smell is still there, produced by the dirty streets full of motor oil and garbage. And nothing looks pretty. You are talking here about reconstructing France, but you haven't enough brains to build a gutter to keep the streets clean." So does the *laudator temporis acti* revel in recollections of the things that were pleasing and remembers not the things that were offensive. But while his audience would still preserve, doubtless, a bourgeois preference for paved streets and underground drainage, they should not forget that the Philadelphia assailed by Franklin for its mire and dust was not exceptional in its day. In her *Life of Lincoln*, Ida Tarbell says of the National Capital itself in the year 1848: "The streets were unpaved, and their dust in summer and mud in winter are celebrated in every record of the period."

It was not the intention of Mr. Faris to rehearse the oft-told tale of Philadelphia's wholly enviable progress and splendid eminence. His purpose evidently was to make the reader intimately familiar with the varied phases of life in the olden city, and his method consists principally in extracting most abundantly from diaries and letters, many of which are still in manuscript and unedited, of the people whose life he depicts. His bibliography of two pages is of itself a most informing exhibit that has its own touches of quaintness in the mere titles quoted. He refuses of set purpose to avail himself of the great treasury of facts, anecdotes, illustrations, collected by Watson for his *Annals*. Neither does he refer to Scharf and Westcott, the most laborious historians of the city. His volume is intended to be a chatty companion for our leisure hours, somewhat unmethodically entertaining; and it succeeds in presenting to the reader a fairly graphic portrayal of the people and the place wherein they dwelt.

The volume contains nothing that is of peculiar interest to Catholics, and it may fairly be pointed out that the writer missed not a little of real romance in omitting mention of "Old St. Joseph's," St. Mary's and Holy Trinity Church. The legend of Evangeline would have brightened pages which, despite their

alluring invitation held out in the word "romance," may prove quite dull reading, we fancy, to all but dyed-in-the-wool Philadelphians possessed of a peculiar turn for the "quaint" rather than the "romantic." For in truth the book deals with quaintness (which is, after all, a relative matter), and not with romance (which is a thing of universal appeal). As to the illustrations, all of them are good, and some of them (*e.g.*, pp. 174, 202, 231, 245, 278) are excellent.

As the book of Mr. Faris might with felicitous accuracy have exchanged the word "Romance" in its title for "Quaintness," so this latest volume from the historical pen of Mrs. Stanard might well have borne the title of *The Romance of Old Virginia*. For the story of the early colonization of that commonwealth abounds in exciting and colorful incidents with a background of highly varied pioneer activities. The contrasts in purpose, plan, personnel, and *matériel* between the settlements at Philadelphia and Jamestown are sharply distinctive. Quaintness (from the viewpoint of this twentieth century) may have characterized the early life of Philadelphia, but romance undoubtedly accompanied every step of the pioneers in Virginia. Penn's clarity of vision, honesty of purpose, and broad ideals of tolerance, combined with a high order of practical statesmanship, foretold an orderly, and therefore a sufficiently prosy, development of his province. His Green Town, founded on peaceful and honest principles, prospered peacefully and progressively without any well-nigh destructive or even gravely untoward crises. He made friends of the aborigines, paying them for the land which, by a legal fiction, was already his own. The mutual pact of good-will was not fortified with any oath—"the only treaty never sworn to and never broken." And so it happens that the early story of Philadelphia is fairly prosy. But the colonization of Virginia was a disorderly process, marked by lack of clear plan, of well-defined purpose, of practical foresight, of hardy and honest personnel, of a sense of tolerance, and largely of a sense even of the common decencies of life. Troubles with the Indian tribes were of course constant, rising at times to horrible massacres followed by still more horrible reprisals; and, mingled with the fevers native to the soil, there was the human fever for mythical stores of gold "a little further on" in the unexplored wilderness.

The disastrous communism of labor followed by the drastic individualism of a slightly later day furnish forth incidents for romantic treatment. Meanwhile, what imagination is not touched by the episodes connected with such names as those of Captain John Smith, Powhatan, Pocahontas, Rolfe? The story is sketched by Mrs. Stanard in her first two chapters (pp. 1-77).

The volumes of Mr. Faris and Mrs. Stanard agree in general plan. In both we find a fairly consecutive narrative of the beginnings, the story of Philadelphia by the former devoting thereto the first three chapters. The remaining chapters in either volume are not closely interrelated. Mrs. Stanard takes in succession these topics: household goods (furniture, plate); social life (the home, hospitality, festivities, gaming, taverns, fairs, etc.); courtship and marriage; dress and jewels; the intercourse between Virginia and England; the theater; outdoor sports; education (free schools, private schools, tutors, William and Mary College, studying abroad); books; music; pictures; religion; funeral customs. There is an index of 24 pages. The many illustrations are attractive and beautifully executed, and the book is a fine product of the publisher's art.

The two volumes we are reviewing will appeal almost exclusively, no doubt, to the interest of the localities severally covered by them. In their very nature they are peculiarly local, and insensibly (and mostly by indirection) will be eulogistic or apologetic in character. Accordingly the outlook may not always be as broad as "the general reader" might desire. Mrs. Stanard, for instance, begins her work with this statement: "Three hundred years ago, as every school child knows, European civilization was already comparatively ripe. . . . But America was still a wilderness—its only roads the trail of the Indian . . . its only sign of human habitation clusters of bark huts and such patches of corn, beans, and tobacco as savages were able to cultivate by scratching the ground with the most primitive implements of wood and stone." And so civilization began in "America" with the advent of the Jamestown pioneers. But "America" is rather a large term and inevitably makes us think of the Spanish colonizers, not to speak of the Portuguese and the French. Even "North America" would be too large a term. "The United States" would convey a still smaller territorial

picture to the mind and yet remain too large a term, for Florida and New Mexico would utter a historical protest. "The English Colonies" in America would be more satisfactory as a background of territory for the settlement at Jamestown and would remind the reader that the English were notably late and remiss in the colonization of "America." It may not be unwise to insist upon such elementary points of accuracy, in view of the fact that an official weekly of one of our universities recently made the foolish boast that its medical school was the first one organized in America. There was no apparent misunderstanding of the term "America," for when the present reviewer called the editor's attention to the fact that there were Spanish medical colleges in "America" nearly two centuries earlier than the one in question, the editor declared that he had consulted some of the professors in his medical school and that they considered the matter of priority doubtful!

Again, there is perhaps too much stress (for "the general reader") laid upon the "gentlemen" settlers at Jamestown in Mrs. Stanard's book. The word is, however, not hers, but that of contemporary records or chronicles, and Mrs. Stanard accordingly puts it, very properly, in quotation-marks. In view of the delicate character of the subject, the fifty long pages devoted to it seem almost to challenge the vitriolic rhetoric of those whose Northern sensibilities are irritated by any reference to the F. F. V.'s. Mrs. Stanard does not mention James Russell Lowell's classical analysis in *The Bigelow Papers* (Second Series, No. III), but nevertheless quotes from Governor Berkeley's *Discourse and View of Virginia* (1663): "Another great imputation lyes on the Country that none but those of the meanest quality and corruptest lives go thither. . . . But this is not all true, for men of as good families as any subjects in England have resided there . . .," and Berkeley goes on to mention some of these and to refer vaguely to "a hundred others, which I forbear to name." Upon this, Mrs. Stanard comments fairly enough: "There is no doubt that the 'imputation' referred to by Berkeley was long prevalent in England. It probably arose, in part, from the exportation of convicts, but chiefly from the infamous system of kidnapping so widely spread there" (p. 50).

The chapter on "Religion" (pp. 320-340) does not even men-

tion the word Catholic, although Colonial Virginia enacted special and very severe laws against Catholics. Quakers, Presbyterians, and "dissenters" in general receive fair notice. The author deems it "a subject of gratification to Virginians that, though there was in the colony much irritating and troublesome persecution in the way of fines, and some banishments and imprisonments, no one was ever put to death within its borders for either religious views or witchcraft, nor with the exception of some whippings—not many apparently—and where witchcraft was the charge, a few duckings, were such offenders made to submit to corporal punishment."

The author puts clearly, in her Preface, the purpose of a work such as she has undertaken: "How may we call to life the everyday men and women of other times, obtain glimpses of them in their homes, going about their business or pursuing pleasure, know them as they were known to their families and neighbors? Not by reading history. . . . A gossip letter, though crumbling and yellow, telling what company the writer had for dinner and what there was to eat, the jokes that were cracked and healths drunk; a fragment of a diary giving the neighborhood news, the condition of the crops or the latest political excitement; a tailor's or a milliner's bill; a will; an inventory; a court record of a lawsuit or a trial, will make a bygone day more real than volumes of history." Virginia, she assures us, "is rich in this graphic kind of material," in spite of "the lamentable destruction of early records." For there still remain many colonial county records, collections of family papers, quaint newspapers and pamphlets, privately published and other somewhat (relatively) inaccessible books, and upon such scattered and fragmentary sources she has drawn to furnish forth a stately and carefully compiled volume.

HUGH T. HENRY, LITT.D.

De Geschiedenis Van Het Amerikannsche Volk. By Arthur Meijer. Bewerkt door. H. H. Langereis, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1915.

This small volume of two hundred pages is an attempt to interpret the History of the United States for the Holland people. The text is divided into twenty-eight short chapters